

AGENDA # 8

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 16, 2017

TITLE: 222 North Charter Street – PD(SIP), 12-
Story Student Housing Building, 8th Ald.
Dist. (48348)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 16, 2017

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Amanda Hall, Cliff Goodhart, Rafeeq Asad, Lois Braun-Oddo, Michael Rosenblum, John Harrington and Tom DeChant.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of August 16, 2017, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a PD(SIP), 12-story student housing building located at 222 North Charter Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Randy Bruce, representing Jim Stopples; Alan Fish and Jim Stopples. Registered and speaking in opposition was Gary Brown, UW-Madison.

The property currently contains a five bedroom house. This southwest end of campus is underserved in terms of student housing. The plans show a loading zone and one accessible parking stall; the applicants are considering eliminating those and utilizing just moped parking. The building is 12 stories with brick with metal infill panels in two colors. The applicants feel the size of the building fits well in this quadrant. The basement is devoted to bicycle parking with the main level housing trash and service entrances and an exposed parking area. The 12th floor steps back significantly to create a larger roof terrace and a social room.

Gary Brown shared concerns with this project. This parcel and entire block have been in their campus development plan boundary for about 20-30 years. The University is interested in the property and have been negotiating with the seller on a price. Residential is something that is appropriate in this area, but the *Regent Street South Campus* Plan provides design guidelines and recommendations for development in this part of the campus with shorter buildings. Just to the south across the railroad tracks is a six-story residential building; and an eight-story building on Spring Street. Other smaller scale buildings seem to be what fits in this area. The plan talks about the need for stepbacks and setbacks on Charter Street but none of the plans show these. In looking at infill projects like this one, it is important to think about the overall environment. There are no details on stormwater management. Why is there no retail on the first floor to activate the street level? We are generally concerned with the project in terms of the height of the building and the impact to the overall campus. The campus master plan shows a 5-6 story building on this site and would include a full block development of that site. We are starting to look at redevelopment of the Zoology building in this general area and will likely include removing the parking in that area and putting it into a structure. The block to the north of that will likely be a built-out as the second phase of the Institute for Discovery.

Jim Stopples spoke in support of the project. He purchased the parcel in 2004 after the previous owner didn't come to an agreement with the University to buy it. Stopples offered to sell the parcel to the University in 2012 but received no offer. In 2014 he again approached the University and they came back with a too-low offer. That led him to the neighborhood plan (i.e. the *Regent Street South Campus Plan*), and the idea of putting high density student housing in this location which is what they've been working on. When the master plan was put together, it noted this parcel as "privately owned."

Alan Fish spoke in support of the project. He touched on the assessed values and average appraisals the University uses to purchase property, which is significantly lower than market value. In this particular case they spent a lot of time looking at the *Regent Street South Campus Plan*. The main focus from a housing standpoint is to add more high-density housing proximate to campus, particularly in this area, by trying to convert rental apartments into owner-occupied housing, with the area north of Dayton Street calling for twelve stories. The issues of trade-offs in different uses, the plan density, setbacks and stepbacks, and zoning are all going to have to be resolved beyond here, but the team wanted feedback on the design.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Why don't you store all those bicycles on the first floor and let the mopeds, which have motors, go down into the basement?
 - We haven't really addressed yet how we're going to handle the mopeds. That's something we should address as we move forward.
- Take a look at the face of the building along the railroad tracks. That could maybe be outdoor parking space because it's not the most desirable occupied space.
- Have you looked at stepbacks?
 - If we start taking 15-foot stepbacks on two of the building faces, there's no real developable portion of the upper levels. We look at this site a little bit like when we worked on the "City View" development on Frances Street next to Dotty's. It's a similar slender building and actually that site is smaller.
- (Secretary) What is the height you're showing?
 - We're well under the 172 feet; it's 140 feet.
- What's the property just north of this that you have shown some pavers and trees?
 - That's the University's.
- When you have move-ins, how do you get parents dropping off kids? It just seems like that would be a disaster.
 - Certainly we'll have to have a management plan for that.
 - These units would be furnished with beds, living room furniture, etc. What they're bringing is clothes, computer, bicycles. There's not as much turn-over either when you get this close to campus. We've handled the turn-over extremely well over 29 years in this industry. It's tight but literally it doesn't take long for them to drop-off when you're not bringing beds, sofas and TVs.
- Students still have a lot of stuff, even without the furniture.
- What about first floor retail?
 - The building just south of this has some first floor retail that has sat vacant off and on for a lot of years, so we're concerned about the viability of that. We'd rather have our common space there.
- I think this fin idea is somewhat diminished by the red. The elevations are very strong without a red bay.
- We've commented on design issues, but when there are plan issues too, I'm a little reluctant to have us start resolving things when it's not going to be this envelope we'll be dealing with.

- Obviously we've got a way to go. I think how we're interpreting the neighborhood plan and how others are interpreting it aren't quite in alignment yet, but we really think we've got good rationale for our interpretations.
- Right, but we can't really judge that here. So how do you resolve that issue - either with City staff or the Plan Commission - before you come back here to say this is the design moving forward?
 - Maybe we go to Plan Commission and have them resolve this issue.
- That's fine, I would prefer you go there before you come back here.
- I think that's a good idea too.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.